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SUBJECT: NPP PARTY LEADERS LOOK TO REUNIFY PARTY AFTER  
CONTENTIOUS CANDIDATE SELECTION

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: In a November 19 meeting with POL Chief and POL FSN, New Patriotic Party (NPP) Chairman Peter Mac-Manu said he is focusing on maintaining NPP unity as the party undergoes a contentious leadership contest in the run up to its December party congress. Mac-Manu said he recently met all 19 NPP presidential contenders and stressed that only one will receive the party nomination and that the other 18 must be "good losers." Mac-Manu also noted that while the leadership contest has featured personality over substance, the NPP will contest the election based on its record over the past eight years compared to the National Democratic Congress' (NDC) record during the prior eight years. Mac-Manu also acknowledged that resurgent smaller parties could have an effect on the election next December, and said the NPP would entertain discussions with these parties should it be advantageous to cut a deal for their support. END SUMMARY.

#### NPP Election Strategy

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¶2. (U) POL Chief and POL FSN met November 19 with NPP Chairman Peter Mac-Manu and Charles Owiredo, NPP Director for International Affairs. After reviewing the history of the NPP as Ghana's center-right party, Mac-Manu emphasized that the NPP would contest the 2008 election on its successful management of Ghana's economy. He noted that during eight years, the government had increased VAT revenue from GH Cedis 1 trillion to GH Cedis 4.7 trillion, that inflation had declined from 22 to 10.8 percent, and that bank interest rates are significantly lower. Mac-Manu also stressed that the NPP was a friend of the private sector and had successfully managed Ghana's relationships with foreign donors.

#### Party Leadership Battle

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¶3. (SBU) Mac-Manu said that he is currently focused on the NPP leadership contest, and admitted some concern over the number of contestants for the NPP nomination. He noted that he had recently met with all 19 presidential candidates and told them only one would emerge as the party's flagbearer. Therefore, Mac-Manu said, he stressed the need for the losers to rally behind the winner and avoid internal divisions after the December party congress. He downplayed the importance of which individual emerges as NPP presidential candidate, adding that a recent poll suggested that NPP voters vote more for the party than for individual personalities. He stressed that the party Secretariat is maintaining strict neutrality to ensure a transparent leadership election.

¶4. (SBU) Mac-Manu conceded that several of the smaller parties, notably the Convention People's Party (CPP), may be stronger in the 2008 elections than in prior years, and that this could be a factor in the election. Therefore, Mac-Manu

said the NPP is open to discussing cooperative arrangements with smaller parties should that prove politically advantageous to the NPP.

#### Inter-party Relations

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¶5. (SBU) Regarding NPP-NDC relations, Mac-Manu said he personally has a good relationship with his counterparts in the NDC and with smaller parties. He acknowledged some bitterness, but said the relationships were getting better. He attributed this in part to foreign donor support for institutions such as the Institute for Economic Affairs, which has served as a forum for inter-party discussions on issues such as public financing.

#### Overseas Voting

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¶6. (SBU) Concerning the Representation of the People's Amendment Act (ROPAA), which would allow overseas Ghanaians to vote, and which has been vehemently opposed by parties other than the NPP, Mac-Manu said the goal is to "bring on board" Ghanaians in the diaspora. He said Ghanaians abroad contribute substantially to the country through remittances, and noted that other African countries have allowed voting by overseas citizens. Nevertheless, Mac-Manu conceded that preparations to implement ROPAA were not well advanced, and said the NPP was not "in a hurry" to see the law implemented for the 2008 election.

#### Election Preparations

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¶7. (U) Mac-Manu said that Ghana's Electoral Commission (EC)

ACCRA 00002451 002 OF 002

was one of the most competent in the region, and the NPP is confident that it will conduct a credible election. He noted that there has been difficulty in updating the voter registration lists, however, due to the need to replace outdated Polaroid cameras used to produce voter identification documents. In addition, Mac-Manu said that the EC has consistently supported political parties with training and vehicles. Mac-Manu also signaled that the NPP supports a recent announcement (following inter-party discussions) in favor of public financing of political parties, and is looking forward to a bill being submitted to parliament.

#### COMMENT

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¶8. (SBU) As a longtime NPP loyalist from the Ashanti region, Mac-Manu won the party chairmanship after serving as chairman of the NPP's Western Region branch from 1998-2005. In that position, Mac-Manu earned a reputation as a formidable party activist by increasing the number of NPP Western Region parliamentary seats from 3 to 12 and increasing the NPP share of the presidential vote from 40.9% to 57.8%. While Mac-Manu's remarks demonstrated optimism concerning his ability to bring the party together following a contentious leadership battle, his comments also suggest continuing serious concern within the NPP that divisions emerging from the nomination contest will persist past the December party Congress. END COMMENT.

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